

The War Paper for Women

VOTES FOR WOMEN

OFFICIAL ORGAN OF THE UNITED SUFFRAGISTS

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DEDICATION

To the brave women who to-day are fighting for freedom: to the noble women who all down the ages kept the flag flying and looked forward to this day without seeing it: to all women all over the world, of whatever race, or creed, or calling, whether they be with us or against us in this fight, we dedicate this paper.

THE OUTLOOK

Matters of serious moment to women are occurring as we go to press. The adoption of general conscription will leave no woman unaffected. Apart from those immediately concerned in a law which takes away the breadwinner from thousands of homes, there are those other thousands of taxpaying women who will have to contribute, directly or indirectly, to the cost of this conscript army, probably the most expensive that has ever been raised in any country. The Parliamentary correspondent of the *Times* (May 11), speaking of the Government's proposals to assist the conscribed men to meet their civil liabilities, estimates that the number of applications will run into hundreds of thousands and the sum required into millions sterling.

Gravity of the Position

Whatever may be felt about the principle of conscription it must be universally conceded that the passage of a law that so vitally affects women in every possible way—for their contribution to the financing of it is immeasurably less important than their contribution in ways both human and spiritual—makes their immediate enfranchisement peremptory. It is therefore ominous that this grave change in the relations of the State to its citizens should occur simultaneously with a demand from both the Liberal and Conservative Party organizations for a revision of the Parliamentary Register—a demand which, under the circumstances, is just and reasonable so far as men are concerned, but ominous so far as women are concerned, in that we have as yet no guarantee that women will be included in this revision. The suggestion, contained in the Parliamentary Notes in the *Daily News* (May 17), that such a measure would be accompanied by redistribution, thus ensuring the values of "one man, one vote," only points to the fulfilment of our own warning expressed in the article—"A Suffrage Stock-taking"—in the March number of *VOTES FOR WOMEN*.

Will it be an Order in Council?

This agitation among the Party organizations, following as it does immediately upon a correspondence between Mrs. Fawcett and the Prime Minister, in which the latter expressly states that no fresh legislation is contemplated

dealing with the Franchise, points to an intention on the part of the Government to deal with this complex and important matter by some means other than an Act of Parliament. This emphasizes the critical nature of the situation for Suffragists. Before the war we might have been reassured (1) by the reflection that a statutory change, such as that involved in shortening the residential qualification and thus practically establishing manhood suffrage, could not be effected unless by Act of Parliament; or (2) by the assurances of "an expert on registration procedure," in the *Westminster Gazette* (May 20), that a revision of the voters' lists at the present time is "quite impossible." But—the war has taught us that nothing is "impossible"—not even the summary suspension of the Habeas Corpus Acts without constitutional sanction—and we have no guarantee, either in recent precedent or in Mr. Asquith's answer to Mrs. Fawcett, that it will not be found possible, and necessary to the Defence of the Realm, to set up a special Register by an Order in Council which shall ignore women and, by widening the basis of the franchise for men and settling for the moment the knotty question of redistribution, set up a new barrier to the enfranchisement of women. Mr. Asquith's statement, to be made in the House after these words appear, will be anxiously awaited by all Suffragists.

The Coalition's Chance

In recognising the full dangers of the position we are not, however, blind to its possibilities, with which Mr. Henry W. Nevins deals fully in an article on page 172, where our readers will also find an account of the Deputation which is seeking an interview with Mr. Asquith on the subject. The time has come for all those who continually tell us that the vote is won (Mr. H. G. Wells, for instance, in the *Daily News* of May 20), to prove their sincerity by guarding against its being lost more effectually than before through the passage now of some measure such as we have indicated. Mr. Asquith once told a Suffrage deputation that our question suffered from being a non-party question: that drawback is converted into a blessing by the existence of a Coalition Government of which Mr. Asquith is the head. We do not base women's claim to the vote on what they can do; with much that the Chairman of the Executive of the N.L.O.W.S. said on this subject in his letter to the *Times* (May 22) we are in agreement. Women have not done war work because they wanted a vote as a reward; their action, like men's, is disinterested and patriotic. But if fresh men voters are to be put on the Register because of their war service then we submit that justice and the human rights of women, on which their claim to enfranchisement is based, demand their inclusion in whatever scheme may be devised in order to effect this change. Official letters, making these representations, have been sent by the Executive of the United Suffragists to the Secretaries both of the Liberal and Unionist War Committees and to every M.P.

Mr. Sheehy Skeffington and Irish Suffrage

The death of Francis Sheehy Skeffington under terribly tragic circumstances, which still

await investigation as these lines are written, occurred on Easter Tuesday, and as soon as the news came United Suffragists, who have special cause to feel his loss, for he was a constant contributor both in signed and unsigned articles to *VOTES FOR WOMEN*, hastened to do honour to his memory by holding a memorial meeting in the Portman Rooms, at which four U.S. members, who were his personal friends, spoke to a large audience composed of men and women of every shade of opinion (see page 174). Mr. George Lansbury also contributes to this issue of our paper a special tribute to his memory. But all will agree, as his widow suggests in her message, which we print elsewhere, that by far the highest honour we can pay to our late friend will be to redouble our energies in the cause he loved. Irish Suffragists, we understand, are already active with a view to putting forward the claims of women in whatever scheme of government may be evolved by those who are now engaged in effecting some settlement of the Irish question, and we urge all who have any influence with Irish or other members of Parliament to back up our Irish fellow-Suffragists in their just demands.

Swearing By—and Swearing At

Mr. Acland spoke highly of women's work on the land in the House of Commons on May 22. Of farmers' prejudices he said:—

All who have tried women are pleased, and swear by them; all who have not tried them do not believe in them, and, it may be, continue to swear at them.

To women's help he attributed largely the supply of women now forthcoming, and he mentioned specially the women organizers of the Employment Department of the Board of Trade and the Women's National Land Service Corps, which has grown, we believe we are right in saying, out of a Suffrage organization. "The trouble," he said:—

that women are taking to get all this organization going in every county is beyond all praise. As a result of it, about 35,000 women have registered as willing to work.

"When all is said and done," concluded the Secretary to the Board of Agriculture, "it is on women's work that we must depend this year very largely." Mr. Acland is a Suffragist, and we look to him, in the face of these admissions, to see to it that women are not done out of their citizenship through reforms of the Register while they are saving their country from starvation by their labour. This was pointed out to Mr. Acland in an official letter from the United Suffragists, on whose behalf Miss Brewster wrote also to Mr. Steel-Maitland, M.P., congratulating him on his avowed conversion to Woman Suffrage, and asking him to put it into effect by urging the Government to include women in their new franchise proposals.

Women and Men in Industry

We very gladly welcome signs of men's co-operation with women in the settlement of Labour questions affecting both. At the first full meeting of the Triple Labour Alliance (miners, railwaymen, and transport workers), in the consideration of demobilization after the war, it was resolved:—

That all workers, whether men or women, shall be, on their unemployment, provided with other

work at the standard living rates, or with full maintenance by the State.

The question of women's employment at the pit-head, on which the men have hitherto proved obdurate, is also receiving sympathetic consideration by the miners, according to Mr. Robert Smillie, and this on the basis of equal pay for equal work. Mr. Fred Bramley (National Amalgamated Furnishing Trades Association) will be one of the speakers at a very important Conference, at which the United Suffragists will be represented, to be held after we go to press, by the Women's Labour League, when the subject of discussion will be the future of women who have become skilled in trades hitherto in the hands of men, and of untrained girls who have entered industry during the war.

Poison for Babies—at 6d. a Quart

"The price of war and Empire is paid out of the baby's bottle," said a milk dealer to a *Daily News* representative when discussing the profit-sharing system, aided by war conditions, which has made milk, sold by the farmer at 3d. a quart, reach the exorbitant retail price of 6d., with a prospect of rising to 8d. What is the result? That the housewife, and the baby, have to go without, while the farmers, as one has stated in a letter to the Press, have to feed pigs and chickens with the surplus they cannot sell! In addition, it is said that milk has never been so full of impurities. As the *Times* pointed out recently, there is on the Statute book "an Act designed to protect the public against the tricks of unscrupulous dairy farmers and milk dealers." This is the Pure Milk Act, which, after being shelved for years, was at last passed, largely owing to the agitation by Suffragists, in which VOTES FOR WOMEN took a leading part, in August, 1914—and then was postponed in its operation until six months after the war, ostensibly for lack of the necessary inspectors! We do not think that this postponement would have been found necessary if Parliament had been responsible to the baby's mother, as well as to the baby's father.

Thrift and Extravagance

The rise in the cost of living, which has reduced the pre-war purchasing power of a sovereign to 11s. 2d., hits no one so hard as the Old Age pensioner, whose 5s. is now worth only 2s. 11d., and the sweated woman worker in those trades in which there has been no rise of wages since the outbreak of war. At a meeting of the Liberal Women's Suffrage Union, Miss Margaret Bondfield gave an instance of a woman in the confectionery trade, earning at best only 3d. an hour, who now has to spend 8s. 7½d. on food which cost her 4s. 5½d. before the war. Yet we are told that there is no retrenchment in the menus of the expensive hotels, restaurants, and clubs, or other evidence of a scarcity of food which accounts for this increase in price and spells starvation to the poorer wage-earner. Women are being lectured by Peers and others in the columns of the Press for extravagance in dress (though we should like to mention to these righteous folk in passing that high-heeled shoes are rather cheaper, because more conventional, than low-heeled ones, as dress reformers know to their cost); but we feel that national thrift could far better be served by the legend—"It is unpatriotic to eat extravagantly." And most emphatically we protest against the decision of some local authorities to "economise" by ceasing to water and scavenge the streets—an encouragement to infantile mortality which we are glad to note, from an answer given by Mr. Long in the House on May 22, has not the approval of the Local Government Board.

Items of Interest

A woman has been elected vice-chairman of the Hendon Board of Guardians, and two women sanitary inspectors have been appointed at Greenwich by the Local Government Board. But—an old gentleman of 86 has been considered a preferable co-option to that of a woman by the Southwark Board of Guardians!

The Dansk Landsforbund has been formed by the newly enfranchised Danish women with the sole object of supporting the Suffrage move-

ment in those countries where women have not yet the vote.

The Congressional Union for Woman Suffrage (Washington) has summoned a conference of women voters from the enfranchised States to meet in Chicago on June 5-7 to launch a Woman's Party, which shall work independently of all political organizations to secure the passage of the National Suffrage Amendment.

Mr. Long stated in the House on May 22 that the infant death rate in London for the first quarter of 1916 is lower than that of the corre-

sponding quarter during each of the last ten years.

A woman stoker is employed in a South London factory furnace; and both at Clare (Suffolk) and Watlington (Oxon) there are now teams of women bell-ringers. The Home Office, however, has refused to licence women taxi-drivers, on the plea that they cannot handle luggage—or so it was reported.

Lady Procter, President of the Y.W.C.A., stated recently that there were now at the very least 100,000 girl clerks in London, as against 27,000 before the war.

FRANCIS SHEEHY SKEFFINGTON—R.I.P.

"A MAN IS PASSING"

A Tribute from a Friend

Sheehy Skeffington has passed out. The manner of his going is well known to us all. We know that he faced death with the same equal courage that he faced life: with the clear knowledge that death for him had no sting, and that the victory rests not with those who sent him hence, but with the great cause for which his life was sacrificed.

This is not the moment to estimate either the gain or the loss of the Irish struggle. At present statesmen and ecclesiastics are trying to find a means of solving the century-old problem of how to administer Ireland. The fact that it is so being considered is due entirely to the knowledge that the British people will not endure the intolerable condition of affairs which makes it possible to administer Ireland only by force of arms.

Our friend was a true champion of liberty in its broadest and best sense. He loved Ireland. Some will say he loved her too well. This cannot be. His whole life proves that love and devotion for his own country only intensified and made more perfect his love for humanity. At one and the same time he was nationalist and internationalist. To those of us who are suffragists this is easy to understand, because our faith is built on the same kind of rock as his. We know that neither men nor women can be developed by other people. They may gain experience and knowledge from others, but each man and woman must work out his or her own salvation. Sheehy Skeffington recognised that men for many centuries now have tried to manage and regulate the lives of women, have hid them away and kept them apart, giving them no voice, no say in their life's work; and he understood—none better—that the salvation of women lay in removing the shackles that enslave them. It was the same with Ireland. He understood the Irish people; knew their limitations, as he knew the limitations of women. But he could also see that the attempts to think for Ireland, act for Ireland, were unnatural and could never succeed, because they left out of account what is a quite natural law with regard to both men and women, that salvation, both individually and socially, must come from within each human being.

Those of us who are left behind to carry on the work to which he gave such splendid service must all be inspired by his courage and devotion. We shall think of his wife and his little son, and shall send them all the love and sympathy possible; but none know better than Mrs. Sheehy Skeffington that his life has not been in vain, and that by his death he has brought us all to a better realisation of the greatness of the cause for which he lived and died. It is so true of him that although his body is in the grave the great cause of humanity does go marching on; she is of the sort out of which heroines are made, and will be cheered and comforted by the knowledge that his life and death have not been in vain.

Thinking of what I should say in this small tribute to the memory of my friend my wife called my attention to some splendid words written by Mr. Vance Cook to commemorate the passing of a great American, Tom Johnson, the famous disciple of Henry George, a man who lived and died for great causes. I take the

liberty of concluding this with an extract from his beautiful poem:—

And he is fallen? Aye, mark him well,
He ever rises further than he fell.
A man is passing? I salute him, then,
In these few words: "He served his fellow men."
And he is passing, but he comes again.
He comes again, not in that full fleshed form
Which revelled in the charge, which rode the storm,
But in that firm fixed spirit which was he.
That heritage he left for you and me—
Before no vested wrong to bow the knee,
Before no Righteous Fight to shirk or flee,
Before all else to make the people free.

George Lansbury.

MESSAGE FROM

MRS. SHEEHY SKEFFINGTON

Mrs. Sheehy Skeffington writes to us as follows:—"I should be glad if you would in VOTES FOR WOMEN express my thanks to all Suffragist friends who have written to me in my sorrow, and my deep appreciation of the kind thought that suggested the Memorial Meeting, whose telegram I have received. It is my hope that my husband, through his death as in his life, may help the causes to which he devoted himself. The sympathy and kindness of Suffragists have given me much comfort and support."

POINTS IN HIS CAREER

As we go to press the report of the inquiry into the tragic death of Francis Sheehy Skeffington has not been made public; but the plain facts are known to our readers, who will join with us in expressing the deepest sympathy with his widow and little son, as well as a warm sense of the loss sustained by the Suffrage movement in the death of so great and gallant a supporter of our cause.

In addition to his untiring efforts on behalf of the emancipation of his own countrywomen in Ireland, Mr. Sheehy Skeffington never lost an opportunity of helping forward the woman's movement, whether in England or America (in which country he conducted a Suffrage lecturing tour quite recently), or wherever he could lend a hand in this direction. The pages of the *Irish Citizen*, that admirable paper so ably edited by him and his wife, bear witness to his fearless championship of all movements for human freedom. Readers of VOTES FOR WOMEN will remember the excellent articles he has contributed from time to time to its columns, notably those called "Redmond the Fox" (May 10, 1912) and "A Chance for the Irish Peers" (June 26, 1914), in both of which he urged the inclusion of Woman Suffrage in the Home Rule Bill. Now that a new Irish settlement is under discussion, the following passages from his pen are of special significance:—

(1) "Those who desire to see the Irish Parliament enter on its great national work worthily, with full knowledge and authority, will take care that it shall be representative, not only of every class and creed (as Mr. Redmond has often most eloquently urged), but, what is still more important, of both sexes."—(Letter to the *Nation*, October 28, 1911.)

(2) "As Suffragists in England had to teach the Liberal Party that there can be no true Liberalism which ignores women, so Suffragists in Ireland will have to teach Mr. Redmond and his followers that there can be no free nation without free women."—(VOTES FOR WOMEN, May 10, 1912.)

Francis Sheehy Skeffington was known also as a staunch pacifist. He based his pacifism, like his Nationalism, on his firm belief in the participation of women in public life. In an article in the *Irish Citizen*, since reprinted, he demonstrates "first, that war is necessarily bound up with the destruction of Feminism; secondly, that Feminism is necessarily bound up with the abolition of war." He looked forward, with all Suffragists, to a future in which men and women together would seek, and find, some other solution of international differences than one based on physical force.

THE CAMPAIGN

FRIDAY, MAY 26; 8 P.M.—CONFERENCE OF LONDON U.S. MEMBERS.—ESSEX HALL, ESSEX STREET, STRAND, W.C. MRS. PETHICK LAWRENCE AND COMMITTEE.

Tuesday, May 29; 8 p.m.—Open Meeting.—U.S. Women's Club, 92, Borough Road, S.E. Speaker: Miss Evelyn Sharp.

Thursday, June 1; 4.30 p.m.—Drawing-room Meeting.—Hostess: Miss Anna Martin. Speaker: Mrs. Pethick Lawrence.

Thursday, June 1; 4.30 p.m.—Drawing-room Meeting.—Hostess: Mrs. Nesbitt, 38A, Trebovir Road, Earl's Court. Speakers: Mrs. Cobden Hirst, Miss Evelyn Sharp.

Thursday, June 1; 8 p.m.—At Home.—Suffrage Club, Liverpool. Hostess: Miss Isabel Buxton.

Thursday, June 1; 5 p.m.—Open Air.—Hyde Park. Speakers: Mrs. M. E. Davies, Mrs. Gregory.

Friday, June 2; 8 p.m.—Members' Meeting.—Onward Buildings, Manchester.

Sunday, June 4; 5 p.m.—Open Air.—Hyde Park.

Tuesday, June 6; 8 p.m.—Open Meeting.—U.S. Women's Club. Speaker: Mrs. Pethick Lawrence.

WEDNESDAY, JUNE 7; 7.30 P.M.—U.S. AT HOME.—CENTRAL HALL, WESTMINSTER. CHAIR: MR. PETHICK LAWRENCE; OPENER OF DISCUSSION, MR. LAURENCE HOUSMAN. ADMISSION FREE.

Thursday, June 8; 5 p.m.—Open Air.—Hyde Park.

Friday, June 9; 7.45 p.m.—Members' Meeting.—Onward Buildings, Manchester. Speaker: Miss Ellen Wilkinson.

Tuesday, June 13; 8 p.m.—Open Meeting.—U.S. Women's Club. Speaker: Miss Craies.

Thursday, June 15; 5 p.m.—Open Air.—Hyde Park. Speakers: Mrs. M. E. Davies and others.

Friday, June 16; 8 p.m.—Members' Meeting.—Onward Buildings, Manchester.

Sunday, June 18; 5 p.m.—Open Air.—Hyde Park. Speakers: Mr. Darby and others.

Tuesday, June 20; 8 p.m.—At Home.—U.S. Women's Club. Speaker: Miss Ada Moore.

Thursday, June 22; 5 p.m.—Open Air.—Hyde Park.

Sunday, June 25; 5 p.m.—Open Air.—Hyde Park. Speakers: Mrs. M. E. Davies, Miss Somers.

Tuesday, June 27; 8 p.m.—Open Meeting.—U.S. Women's Club. Mrs. Gregory.

Thursday, June 29; 5 p.m.—Open Air.—Hyde Park.

IMPERIAL SUFFRAGE CONFERENCE

British Dominions Woman Suffrage Union

The list of speakers at the Conference to be held at the Central Hall, Westminster, in July, includes the following:—

July 5.—"Loss of Nationality through Marriage." Mrs. Ford-Smith, Miss C. Macmillan, Miss L. Nettlefold.

Overseas Suffrage Meeting.—Mrs. Pethick Lawrence (Chair), Mrs. Beamish Lane (South Africa). Other names next month.

July 6.—"Sex Morality and Sex Education." Miss Neilans, Miss Royden, Miss Evelyn Sharp, Miss Norah March, B.Sc., Dr. Barbara Tchaykovsky, Rev. Dr. Scott Lidgett, Miss Abadam, Mr. Maurice Gregory.

July 7.—"Economic Position of Women and Children." Mrs. Pember Reeves (Chair), Miss Margaret Ashton, Miss Anna Martin, Mrs. Despard, and representatives from the Workers' Suffrage Federation, Women's Co-Operative Guild, Women's Labour League, National Federation of Women Workers. (Names of speakers from overseas later.)

Public Suffrage Meeting

A number of the Suffrage Societies, including the U.S., have already intimated their intention of co-operating in the Public Suffrage Meeting ("Woman Suffrage and the Empire") on July 7. (Particulars next month.)

The International Women's Franchise Club kindly offers the hospitality of its rooms to delegates and representatives from overseas for the week of the Conference. An "At Home" will be given by the Workers' Suffrage Federation on Monday, July 3, at 3 p.m., at 400, Old Ford Road, Bow, E. The Church League for Woman Suffrage will conduct a procession and Intercalary Service in Hyde Park on Saturday, July 8.

Further particulars may be obtained from Miss H. C. Newcomb (Hon. Sec. B.D.W.S.U.), c/o International Woman Franchise Club, 9, Grafton Street, Piccadilly, W.

MR. HUGHES AND WOMAN SUFFRAGE

It has been a great disappointment to Suffragists that in all his utterances Mr. Hughes, who is the representative of Australian women as well as men, has refrained from saying a word about the women's struggle for citizenship over here, or what the woman's vote has done for his own country.

He missed a great opportunity in this way at the mass meeting in the Queen's Hall on May 10. Two Suffragists in the audience, both members of the British Dominions Woman Suffrage Union, sent up their cards to him, independently, at the end of his speech, begging him to help the women of England by mentioning the subject in his final remarks. Mr. Hughes was seen to read each message, but took no step to carry out the suggestion made in them. There was no vote of thanks, so the representatives of the B.D.W.S.U. were unable to raise the question then, as they had intended to do.

THE I.L.P. RESOLUTION

We mentioned in our last issue that two Suffrage resolutions, with one admirable amendment, were down in the agenda for the annual Conference of the Independent Labour Party, held at Newcastle after we went to press. Resolution I. (Croydon, Hampstead, and Streatham) called upon the Government "to enfranchise women at the earliest possible moment," to which Bristol proposed the amendment—"in time for their inclusion in the new Register to be compiled according to the provision of the Parliament and Registration Act, 1916." Resolution II. (Glasgow City and Coventry) called upon the Government "to enfranchise women and men who have reached the age of 21 years."

A Croydon member of the U.S. writes us that the Suffrage resolutions did not come on until a late hour, and were therefore not discussed. The Croydon delegate moved the first Resolution briefly, saying that events had now proved the ability of and need for women both in politics and industry, and he was sure the Conference would pass the resolution unanimously. The amendment and Resolution II. were then moved formally, and the Conference decided to embody resolutions and amendment in one omnibus motion, which was agreed to without a division.

It is a pity that important motions of this kind should always come on too late for serious attention to be paid to them; but we are glad that the I.L.P. stand pledged to urge the inclusion of women in the new Register that is to be formed before the next General Election.

A SLANDER QUASHED

Report of the Women's Advisory Committee on Alleged Excessive Drinking Among Women

The second Report of the Central Control Board, issued at the beginning of May, shows a remarkable decline in convictions for drunkenness since the Board began its work. In London alone the number of weekly convictions has dropped from 1,084 (in the first half of 1915, before the Board came in force) to 591 at the beginning of this year. All reformers will unite in hoping that this admirable work will not cease with the war, but that the hands of those who wish to make it permanent will be strengthened by the driving force of the woman's vote.

The Women's Report

To women the most interesting section of the Report (which can be obtained from Wyman and Sons, 29, Bream's Buildings, E.C., price 3d.) is the summarised statement, given on page 8, of the proceedings and recommendations of the Women's Committee, appointed under the chairmanship of Mrs. Creighton to inquire into the alleged excessive drinking among women.

Three clauses—two conclusions, and one a statement of opinion, are highly important. The conclusions are as follows:—

(1) "The undoubted increase of excessive drinking amongst women is mainly amongst those who drank before. The drinking habits of these women have not, in the first place, been caused by the war or by the receipt of allowances, though their opportunities for indulgence have been largely increased by the uncontrolled possession of more money than they had before. The Committee have received no evidence that women and girls who did not drink before have taken in any considerable numbers to drinking to excess in consequence of the war or the receipt of allowances."

(Coupled with this is the opinion that drinking at home appears to be on the increase, and that this tendency demands consideration.)

(2) "There is much evidence of improvement in the homes and in the condition of the children, and of wise spending on the part of the great majority of those in receipt of war allowances."

The important statement of opinion runs thus: "The Committee strongly deprecate any restrictions dealing specially with women, both on account of their inherent injustice and because they are convinced that the evil of excessive drinking must be combated as a whole, in men and women alike."

We greatly welcome these three clauses, especially the concluding statement, which we regard as a victory for the Suffrage point of view. We heartily endorse also, such recommendations as "the stricter enforcement of the existing law with regard to the serving of persons already the worse for drink," the appointment of more inspectors for this purpose, and also of women police and matrons at the police courts, the "statement on

the labels of medicated wines of the amount of alcohol contained in the bottle," and the provision of clubs, &c., for women, girls, and whole families. The recommended "reduction of the number of licensed houses" seems to us less useful than would be an insistence upon the provision of decent places of refreshment where men, women, and children can meet together.

A Serious Peril

There is, however, a peril lurking in one recommendation by the Committee which is somewhat at variance with the humanity of its other proposals. This is the suggestion for "the extension of the plan of trusteeship for the payment under proper safeguards of separation allowances," involving the appointment of "special officers appointed by a central authority to deal with the women who are or should be put under trusteeship."

We object to this provision, as we object to all kinds of supervision of women as long as women are in a position of subjection in the State, because it places them in the power of officials who are not in any sense responsible to the women of the country. Also, it seems to us to be just an instance of that differentiation between the sexes against which the Committee so wisely protests. As long as no supervision is exercised over the way a man spends his wages (and he may drink these away while his family starves, just as easily as a soldier's or sailor's wife may drink away her separation allowance) the soldier's wife is placed in a position of inferiority by being subjected to such supervision.

NORTHERN MEN'S FEDERATION FOR WOMEN'S SUFFRAGE.

EDINBURGH VOTERS' PETITION

Calling on the GOVERNMENT to include WOMEN in the NEW PARLIAMENTARY REGISTER.

Mass Meeting, Synod Hall, Edinburgh, WEDNESDAY, JUNE 7th, at 8 p.m.

Speakers:

Mrs. ARNCLIFFE SENNETT,
Mr. BEN TILLET,
Mrs. CAYENDISH BENTINCK,

AND MEMBERS OF THE TOWN COUNCIL.

THE SUFFRAGETTE NEWS SHEET.

The Official Organ of the Suffragettes of the W.S.P.U. Issued monthly. Price 1d. A live paper devoted entirely to the Woman's cause. No Suffragist can afford to be without it. Read our present series of articles on the menace to women as revealed in the report of the Commission on Venereal Diseases. Back numbers still obtainable. Annual Subscription 1/6, including postage, should be sent to the Business Manager for the News Sheet at the Office of the S.W.S.P.U., the Emily Davison Lodge Rooms, 144, High Holborn, W.C.

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RUSSIA IN ENGLAND.

TWO PERFORMANCES

(under the direction of Madame Krassavina and Mrs. A. E. Corner) will be given at

CAXTON HALL, WESTMINSTER.

THURSDAY, June 8th, at 3 p.m. and 6.30 p.m.

The programme will include selections from Russian music (vocal and instrumental), a Russian play, Russian children at play, lantern slides, Russian dancing, and short addresses (in English) on Russian women in art and literature, Russian folk-lore, etc.

Madame Levinakaja has kindly promised her services. Profits to be shared between the Russian Prisoners of War Committee and the Women's Freedom League.

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VOTES FOR WOMEN

27, CHANCERY LANE, W.C.

Telegraphic Address:—Unisuffra. Holb., London
Telephone:—Holborn 5880

JUNE, 1916.

THE SUFFRAGE DANGER —AND THE OPPORTUNITY

The United Suffragists have long foreseen both the danger and the opportunity which are now fast approaching. Both arise from the decision of the Government last December to extend the life of the present Parliament to next September, and from the absolute necessity of holding the next General Election (whether it comes next autumn or later) upon a new register. The necessity is absolute, because no Government, even if they wished, would be allowed to disfranchise the 5,000,000 men whom Mr. Asquith tells us have joined the Services in one way or other, and have, therefore, in most cases lost the present residential qualification, to say nothing of the very large number of munition workers and other Government employees who have changed their address since last July, and, in consequence, would not appear upon the register next autumn under present regulations. For the same reasons it is evident that a measure of Redistribution will also be demanded and must probably be arranged.

We know that these problems have engaged the Government's attention for some months. On November 4 Lord Lansdowne announced that they intended "to provide the means of compiling a new ad hoc register next year (i.e., in 1916), so that it could be ready when it was wanted." Since then Mr. Asquith, with constantly increasing emphasis, has assured us that the matter is receiving the Government's earnest consideration, and on May 22 he announced he would make a statement during that week.

Mrs. Fawcett's Letter

Probably the simplest and most natural way of dealing with the question would be by a Franchise Bill, to be followed by Redistribution. But the Government might, perhaps, plead that such measures are too vast to be undertaken in the midst of the war. From a correspondence between Mrs. Fawcett and Mr. Asquith (published in part by the *Times*, and in full by the *Manchester Guardian* of May 18) we gather that this would be their plea. Mrs. Fawcett begins her admirable letter by referring to "a very general rumour" that "the Government will, before the general election following the end of the war, find it necessary to deal with the franchise question." She goes on to say that the rumour of extending the franchise to men has caused restlessness and anxiety among Woman Suffrage societies, "not, of course, that any of us are in any degree hostile to the enfranchisement of men who have been

suffering and working for our country," but lest the Suffrage may be dealt with in a manner prejudicial to the future prospects of the enfranchisement of women. Consequently she calls for the inclusion in the Bill of clauses "which would remove the disabilities under which women now labour." "An agreed Bill on these lines," she continues, "would, we are confident, receive a very wide measure of support through the country." She appeals, with justice, to the splendid work done by women in almost every department of national life during the war, and notices the very great accessions of strength which our movement has received during recent months, former opponents now declaring themselves on our side, or, at any rate, withdrawing their opposition. "The change of tone in the Press," she adds, "is most marked."

Mr. Asquith's Answer

We give Mr. Asquith's reply (dated May 7) in full:—

I have received your letter of the 4th. I need not assure you how deeply my colleagues and I recognise and appreciate the magnificent contribution which the women of the United Kingdom have made to the maintenance of our country's cause. No such legislation as you refer to is at present in contemplation, but if and when it should become necessary to undertake it you may be certain that the considerations set out in your letter will be fully and impartially weighed without any prejudice from the controversies of the past.

We also are willing to let the controversies of the past be bygones. But repeated disappointment and long experience of politicians' ways make us cautious in examining their statements. We observe that Mr. Asquith's assurance that "no such legislation as Mrs. Fawcett refers to is at present in contemplation" only means that the Government is not at present contemplating a Franchise Bill with a view to a general election following the end of the war; and he promises only that if and when such legislation should become necessary her considerations will be fully and impartially weighed. Such an assurance and such a promise do not meet the immediately approaching danger in the least degree.

"Only a New Register"?

It is evident that the Government do not intend to introduce a regular Franchise Bill such as was referred to in Mrs. Fawcett's letter. We see from previous statements in Parliament by Mr. Asquith himself, Lord Lansdowne, and Sir John Simon (when still in the Ministry), and we see still more clearly from repeated and increasing statements in the *Times*, the *Westminster Gazette*, the *Manchester Guardian*, and the *Daily News*, that what the Government do intend is simply a Registration Bill, probably accompanied by a Redistribution scheme. The Lobby correspondent of the *Daily News* informs us that the measure is already drafted with a view to a probable General Election in the autumn. It is, therefore, unfortunately obvious that Mr. Asquith's promise to Mrs. Fawcett has no reference to such a measure, and, with regard to the present danger, might just as well not have been made.

We speak of "the present danger" because political observers have all along perceived that, though the new measure will not be called a Franchise Bill, but may slip through as a Bill to Amend the Register, it will in fact create a franchise closely akin to manhood suffrage (indeed, as nearly as possible identical with it), since residential qualifications will be almost certainly removed. If a Redistribution scheme is added all that could be done for men's votes by a regular Franchise Bill will have been accomplished. No future change will then be easy to effect for many years, and the claim of women will have been again left out of consideration, no matter what promises Mr. Asquith has made.

A Suffrage Deputation

In view of these circumstances the following letter was sent to Mr. Asquith on May 19:—

Sir,—On behalf of an influential body of men and women, representing a large number of Trade Unions and political organisations, whose names we enclose, we desire to express our appreciation of the undertaking given by you in your letter to Mrs. Fawcett, published in the *Times* of May 16,

that the claims of women "will be fully and impartially weighed" if and when it becomes necessary for legislation to be affected dealing with the Parliamentary franchise. We are at the same time aware of the possibility that the franchise may be dealt with by such a reform of the Register as would bring in numbers of fresh voters without recourse to fresh legislation, in which case the claims of women would be once more evaded; on the other hand, if fresh legislation should be found necessary, there is every probability that this would be precipitated by some crisis in such a way that it would not be possible for you to consult those most concerned in women's interests when the Bill is before Parliament. We therefore most earnestly ask you to make it possible for our deputation to meet you and the Leaders of the two other Parties of the Coalition—Mr. Bonar Law and Mr. Henderson—at some early date; in order that you may be in possession of our point of view and we in possession of yours, before the time comes for the Government to deal with the matter. We are fully aware, in making this request, of the many claims upon your valuable time. Only our deep sense of the value of unity in the nation at this hour of crisis, and of your power to seal that unity by a beneficent act of statesmanship, impels us to make this claim (which we undertake shall be a very brief one) upon your courtesy and consideration.—Yours faithfully,

(Signed) BARBARA AYRTON GOULD.
(Hon. Sec. Deputation Committee.)

The following Societies support the proposed Deputation:—

Belfast Suffrage Society, Catholic Women's Suffrage Society, Free Church League for Women's Suffrage, Friends' League for Women's Suffrage, Irishwomen's Reform League, Irishwomen's Suffrage Federation, Manchester Men's League, Northern Men's Federation for Women's Suffrage, North London Men's Political Union, Scottish Churches League for Women's Suffrage, Sligo Suffrage Society, Suffragettes of the W.S.P.U., United Suffragists, Women's Freedom League, Women Sanitary Inspectors' Suffrage Society, Women Teachers' Franchise Union, Women's Tax Resistance League, and Women Writers' Suffrage League.

The following are the names of those composing the Deputation:—

Mrs. Cavendish Bentinck, Mrs. Despard, Mr. H. H. Elvin (Secretary of the National Union of Clerks), Mr. Vernon Hartshorn (of the Miners' Federation), Miss Winifred Holiday, Lady Muir Mackenzie, Mr. John Masefield, Mr. H. W. Massingham, Mrs. Fenwick Miller, Mr. H. W. Nevinston, Ex-Provost Perry, Miss E. Phipps (President of the Women Teachers' Federation), Mrs. Spring Rice, Lady Forbes Robertson, Mr. W. C. Robinson (Secretary of the Association of Machine Workers), Mrs. Cobden Sanderson, Mrs. Arncliffe Sennett, Miss Evelyn Sharp, Mr. Robert Smillie (President of the Miners' Federation), Mrs. St. Clair Stobart, Mr. Ben Tillet (Secretary of the Dockers' Union), Councillor Ben Turner, Mr. Frederick Whelen, Mr. Robert Williams (Secretary of the National Transport Workers' Federation), and Muriel, Countess De La Warr.

What Suffragists Must Do

Mr. Asquith has replied that our request is receiving consideration. That is natural, for a refusal to consider the Suffragist claim at the present crisis is hardly imaginable. As the *Westminster Gazette*, which is, perhaps, Mr. Asquith's most loyal supporter, observed last December in urging the settlement "by consent between parties" of certain old dividing questions, before the next General Election:—

When the women of the country have shown the zeal and ability to which every camp and hospital bears witness, it cannot be tolerable that we should return to the old struggle about admitting them to the franchise.

We have pointed out the extreme danger which threatens the hopes and objects of all suffragists. We call upon our readers and other suffragists to help avert this danger by concentrating upon the suffrage in this crisis even at the sacrifice of other undertakings, and bringing pressure to bear upon members of Parliament and Cabinet Ministers by all recognised methods, such as correspondence and lobbying. If they do not belong to any of the Suffrage Societies let them at once join the United Suffragists so that the great body of organised opinion may be increased. And at the same time we call upon Mr. Asquith and the Coalition Government to grasp this opportunity of recognising the right of women to full citizenship in the country which women do so much to maintain, and thus of securing for the defence of our liberties the incalculable strength of a genuinely united people.

Henry W. Nevinston.

THE TOAD UNDER THE HARROW

By Anna Martin

IV.

In the first of these articles an attempt was made to set forth as clearly as the exigencies of space allowed, the position of those working married women whose husbands choose to avail themselves of their legal privileges and immunities. The second pointed out that the various moral and economic checks on which society relies to compensate for the defects of its marriage system were demonstrably ineffective; that, even where no blame is attachable to the individual husband, these checks fail to secure for millions of wives the necessities of civilised life. The last article showed that the existing economic relation between father and mother was making many well-intended schemes for social betterment not only abortive but positively mischievous.

Poverty's Share in the Blame

Now it will doubtless be argued by many readers that, on the whole, the wrongs of the wife are simply a part of the general wrong of poverty, and only to be remedied by a removal of their cause; that they therefore constitute no special "feminist" grievance; that if, as in the instance cited last month, a man out of a wage of 28s. surrenders 24s. for the maintenance of his family, tyranny itself could not suggest he should hand over also the remaining pittance. This, indeed, does not state the case quite fairly. The man's own needs are the first charge on the housekeeping allowance; only what is left over is available for the support of his dependants. Nevertheless, it is quite certain that public opinion will never tolerate any attempt to deprive the male worker of the few personal satisfactions his scanty pocket-money secures. Be it noted, however, that this is, in practice, to declare that all additional expenses, whether arising from illness, from the size of the family, or from the demands of the Government, must be met and defrayed by the wife—the partner who is the worse fed, the worse booted, frequently the hardest worked, and who, moreover, is usually in a state of pregnancy. It was shown in a previous article that in the case of innumerable families the sum at the disposal of the wife out of her housekeeping allowance, after she had provided for her husband's food and met her fixed charges, was round about twopence per head per day for herself and her dependent children.

But the truth is that it is the semi-slave status of the wife which is itself the main cause of the poverty in the country. Why are wages so low? Why do working-men consent to accept a share of the national dividend which is demonstrably insufficient to enable them to support their families?

The Man Who Doesn't Strike

Now, broadly speaking, the only known cause for a rise in wages is pressure on the part of the workers to exact an increase. Considering the stupendous latent power of labour, the possessing classes must often wonder why that pressure is not more widely and continuously exercised. Trade Unionists are reckoned by the million, yet, prior to the war, real wages were steadily falling, and so great is the general indifference of working-men to their class interests that no daily Labour paper manages to exist for more than a few months. Now the explanation of this apathy of the rank and file is to be found in the home conditions of the masses. It is clear that even on deplorably low wages the male

head of the house gets pretty well all he actually wants—a wife, a roof over his head, a seat by the fire in the evenings, sufficient food and clothing, and enough loose cash for his beer, tobacco, and newspaper. Of these things he is sure as long as he is at work at all, and the unimaginative, the self-centred, the sluggish, the dissolute, the cautious, see little reason for making efforts or running risks. They leave it to "the wife" to meet all difficulties and emergencies, assume little or no responsibility for the new mouths they are constantly bringing into the world, and take as a matter of course the gradual conversion of the bonny girls they married into worn-out drudges. Did the leaders of the various sections of Labour dare to speak candidly, they would confess that this inert mass of fairly contented wage-earners is the greatest stumbling-block in the way of an effective demand for improved social conditions. It is men of this kind who constitute the handicap on those of their fellows who take a higher view of their domestic responsibilities and whose ambition it is to give their children a better chance than they had themselves. The economic position may be illustrated by imagining what would happen were the railway companies serving the suburbs of London suddenly put into the position of married women and so have no enforceable legal right to payment for services rendered. City clerks willing and anxious to pay their fares would speedily find themselves unable so to do; their salaries would inevitably fall to the level accepted by men who felt no such inward call to honest dealing. The same phenomenon, of course, is found in every quarter of the globe where workers with a low standard of life, comfort, or conduct, come into competition with those of higher ideals.

Helplessness of the Wife

Now, the only possible lever at present conceivable for the permanent raising of wages is to insist that all men shall fulfil their marriage contracts and support their wives and children. It is certain that no workers, good, bad, or indifferent, will consent to live without homes and mates. If they cannot secure these essentials without adequately paying for them, they will take care that their wages are high enough for the purpose. The subject is too complex to be properly discussed here, but space must be found for two or three concluding observations. First, as long as the wife has virtually no claim on her husband for her own and her children's maintenance, a rise of wages for the man is by no means always an unmixed blessing. Within the last few months workmen have constantly demanded and obtained war bonuses—on the plea of the increased cost of food and of all household necessities. The general rule seems to have been that the more conscientious men kept half of the amounts received for their personal comforts, and gave the other half to their wives—who, however, had to bear all the increased expenses. The less conscientious kept every farthing of the bonuses for their own use. The writer indeed knows of one case in which the wife receives the whole amount, but she is a woman of extraordinary force of character. It is not surprising, therefore, that the dividends of certain breweries went up last year to 24 per cent., though millions of men were out of the country or under military discipline.

In the second place, suffragists must beware of any insidious proposal which would merely give the wife a claim to a certain proportion of her husband's wages. Her right to a maintenance for herself and dependent children is absolute, so long as she is discharging her share of the marriage contract, and is not dependent on her debtor's ability to pay. It is ridiculous to consider that men discharge their domestic liabilities by offering the mother the same sum for six children as was sufficient for two. It is needless to point out the important questions which at once arise from these considerations—

questions of the large family, of the definition of maintenance, of the method by which the husband's responsibility shall be enforced. It is obvious, however, that not the least advantage accruing to the nation from the admission of women to citizenship will be the necessity of facing and solving these and similar vital issues instead of persistently shirking them as at present.

(To be concluded)

"VOTES FOR WOMEN"

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Send 2s. to the Publisher, "Votes for Women," 27, Chancery Lane, London, W.C., and we will do the rest.

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UNITED SUFFRAGISTS

27, Chancery Lane, London, W.C. Telephone, Holborn 5880

THE SITUATION

U.S. London Members Summoned

In view of the serious situation created by the prospect of an early revision of the Parliamentary Register, Mrs. Pethick Lawrence, as Hon. Secretary of the London United Suffragists, has summoned a conference of the London members to meet in the Essex Hall, Essex Street, Strand, on Friday, May 26, at 8 p.m., which will take place after we go to press. Mr. Asquith's statement in the House will be discussed.

MEETINGS IN MAY

U.S. At Home

On Wednesday, May 3, United Suffragists were again "At Home" in the Central Hall, Westminster, this time in the evening; and every seat was filled when Mr. Henry W. Nevins took the Chair. This was his first appearance on a Suffrage platform after his return from the Front; and he had a good reception, and spoke on the loss of liberty which is threatened in many directions in consequence of the War. Miss Maude Royden then opened the discussion on "How the Suffrage Movement will take its place in the re-awakening of democracy after the war," and several members of the audience followed with short speeches. The feeling of the meeting seemed unanimous on the necessity for prosecuting the Suffrage campaign with the utmost energy.

The last of the series of monthly U.S. At Homes will take place on Wednesday, June 7, at 7.30, also in the Central Hall, Westminster, when Mr. Pethick Lawrence will be in the Chair, and Mr. Laurence Housman, just returned from America, will speak on "The Back and Front of the Women's Movement." In view of the very critical political situation of our movement at this moment, U.S. members are urged to come in large numbers to this meeting.

At the Portman Rooms

On May 15, at the Portman Rooms, a meeting to do honour to the memory of Francis Sheehy Skeffington, whose services to the Suffrage movement are well-known to our readers, was held by the United Suffragists. Although it was organized in three days the large hall was filled, and the speeches, full of deep feeling, were warmly received by an audience composed of all classes. Mr. George Lansbury was in the Chair, and the speakers were Mrs. Pethick Lawrence, Mr. Henry W. Nevins, and Miss Evelyn Sharp. High tribute was paid to the life work of Mr. Sheehy Skeffington, and the following telegram, to be sent to his widow, was passed by the audience, standing and in silence:—

"Mass meeting of United Suffragists in Portman Rooms, London, assembled to do honour to the memory of Francis Sheehy Skeffington, desire to express their profound sympathy with you in your great sorrow, their deep sense of the loss that has been sustained by the great progressive movement of which the Suffrage movement is a part, and their realisation also of the truth that freedom all over the world will gain immeasurably by his courageous life and death."

We greatly regret that space will not allow us to publish the speeches made at the meeting, which were all of a high level of excellence and deeply stirred the audience.

Drawing-room Meetings

Among drawing-room meetings arranged during the month by members independently of any local branch, we may mention a very successful one held in a charming studio at Bushey on May 17, at which the Misses Gulland were hostesses. Miss Brewster took the Chair, and Miss Evelyn Sharp spoke. Three new members were made, also some subscribers to VOTES FOR WOMEN, and many sympathisers gained. Other meetings will be found mentioned on this page, under the headings of various local centres.

U.S. WOMEN'S CLUB

92, Borough Road, S.E.

Secretary, Miss M. R. Cochrane. Tel.: Hop 4172

Spring Cleaning.—The Club looked beautiful when it re-opened on May 1. The general room has been covered with a charming chintz paper, repainted, and hung with new green curtains. The stairs and hall have also been repainted. The Concert and Lecture Room badly wants similar treatment. Who will send us £5, or part of it, for this purpose? Thanks to Miss Young for 5s.

"Star and Garter" Fund.—The Club members are collecting in aid of this fund for the Home for Disabled Soldiers at Richmond. Miss Ada Moore came on May 16, and gave a delightful account of it to the members, and it is hoped she will come again on June 20, when the money is to be handed in, and it is hoped to make the occasion somewhat of a festive nature.

Jumble Sale.—This will be held soon, and more parcels are needed. Blouses, boots, and shoes are particularly wanted.

Swimming.—On Monday evenings, Mrs. Ayrton Gould takes the younger members to the swimming baths. This costs 4d. per head, of which the girls pay 2d. Who will subscribe towards this admirable object? £2 would probably last the summer.

Flowers.—Thanks to Miss Burke, Mrs. Schutze, Miss Seymour for flowers, which are a real joy to the members. Will someone undertake to send these regularly? Thanks, too, to Mrs. Harben for butter, and to Mrs. Fox for a hay-box, and to others for parcels of clothes.

Funds.—These are much needed. Can any one undertake to raise funds for the upkeep of the Club?

HAMPSTEAD AND GOLDER'S GREEN U.S.

Hon. Secretaries: Miss Daisy Solomon, 64, Pattison Road, N.W.; Miss Dorothy Pethick, 39, Meadway Court, Golder's Green, N.W.

A most successful At Home was kindly given on May 20 by Miss Newcomb and Miss Hodge, at which five new members were made, four new subscriptions to VOTES FOR WOMEN obtained, 25s. collected, and 16s. 6d. in addition subscribed to the Poster Fund. As we are anxious to undertake responsibility for a poster of our own, will members make up the rest of the 25s. needed to have one exhibited for a year? We have in hand 5s., so that we only need 3s. 6d. more. Future At Homes kindly promised are by Madame Alice Godfrey (2, Crossfield Road, N.W.), on Saturday, June 3, when the Hon. Mrs. Haverfield will give an account of her experiences in Serbia. Chair, Miss H. C. Newcomb. Also by Miss Thompson on July 1 (10, Stanley Gardens); speaker not yet fixed. Those who wish for invitations for themselves or friends, please apply to one of the secretaries.

KENSINGTON U.S.

Hon. Sec., Miss Postlethwaite, 47a, Earl's Court Road, W. Telephone: 926 Western

Most interesting speeches were made by Miss May Whitty, Mr. Nevins, and Mrs. Lucy Henderson (Chair) at the "At Home" held in the Town Hall on May 10. The hostesses—Dr. Corthorn, Mrs. Ferguson, Mrs. Fox, Mrs. Cobden Hirst, Mrs. Nesbitt, Mrs. Silver, Mrs. Ward, and Mrs. Hartley Withers—kindly provided the tea and brought friends to the meeting. Papers sold well, and a growing interest was shown in the local work. On Thursday, June 1, at 4.30, Mrs. Nesbitt (38a, Trebovir Road, Earl's Court) is giving a drawing-room meeting; Miss Evelyn Sharp will be the speaker, with Mrs. Cobden Hirst in the Chair. A Jumble Sale will be held at the Shop on June 27, at 11 o'clock, contributions for which are still needed. Thanks to Mrs. Gunn Dick, Mrs. Graham, Mrs. Nesbitt, Mrs. Sloan, Miss Evelyn Sharp, and Miss Yarwood for their gifts towards it, and to Mrs. Akenhausen for 4s. 6d. towards Shop expenses. Mrs. Morrison is to be congratulated on the number of bills she distributed advertising the meeting in the Portman Rooms.

LETCHWORTH U.S.

Hon. Sec.: Miss Pym, 2, Meadow Way Green

A meeting was held at Letchworth, in a studio kindly lent by Miss Pym, on Wednesday, May 17. The chair was taken by a local member, and Mrs. Ayrton Gould spoke on "The Suffrage Demand. What Should it Be?" In her speech Mrs. Gould explained why the U.S. had altered their demand to the vote for women on a democratic basis as it is, or may be, granted to men, and explained why they did not think it wise either to keep the old demand or to ask for adult suffrage. The meeting was well attended, and a lively discussion fol-

lowed. Several members asked how they could help to press the demand for an immediate measure, and many promised to work on lines suggested by the speaker. At the end of the meeting a considerable number of papers were sold.

LIVERPOOL U.S.

Hon. Sec.: Miss Isabel Buxton, 111, Queen's Road


At the first meeting of the newly-elected Committee, held at above address on Thursday, May 11, it was decided to open a Shilling Fund to pay off our last year's deficit. Shillings for this purpose and members' subscriptions will be gratefully received by the Hon. Treasurer. As many of our people were engaged in the Roll of Honour week work, Florence Nightingale's birthday (May 12) was this year celebrated by the placing on her statue of a large crown of laurels, subscribed for her by suffragists, no speeches being made. The Hon. Secretary is at home to members and friends at the Suffrage Club, first Thursday in the month, at 8 p.m. VOTES FOR WOMEN is always on sale at these meetings.

MANCHESTER U.S.

Hon. Sec.: Miss Hope Hampson
Onward Buildings, 207, Deansgate.

Miss Constance Andrews was the speaker at the monthly members' meeting on May 12, and her address on "Woman—Past, Present, and Future" was followed by a lively discussion.

The Branch was one of the convening societies of the second conference to consider "The Conditions of Child Life in Wartime." Six U.S. delegates attended, and various resolutions were passed, the following being proposed by the Manchester and District Federation of Women's Suffrage Societies, and seconded by the U.S.: "In view of the urgency of legislation on problems of child welfare, and of the importance of bringing women's special knowledge to bear on these problems, this meeting considers it imperative that women should be given political power at the earliest possible moment, and that the Government be urged to provide an opportunity under the Registration Bill, so that women may exercise the vote at the next General Election."



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COMPARISON OF PUNISHMENTS

LIGHT SENTENCES

Assaults on Little Girls

The *Reading Standard* (May 6, 1916) reports case of a gardener, aged 51, charged at Reading with an assault on a little girl of 11, who lived in the house where he lodged. His employer gave him a good character; he pleaded guilty.

Sentence: Three months' hard labour.

A correspondent sends us particulars of the case of a naval steward, aged 18, charged at Ker Street Police Court, Devonport, with an indecent assault on a little girl of 12 in a cinema.

Sentence: Fined £1.

HEAVY SENTENCES

Offences Against Property

The *Manchester Guardian* (May 17) reports case of an artilleryman, charged before Mr. Justice Horridge at the Manchester Assizes with forgery and larceny of a cheque-book. There was a previous conviction.

Sentence: Three years' penal servitude.

The *Times* (March 6) reports case of a carpenter, aged 16, charged at the Middlesex Sessions before Mr. Montagu Sharpe with stealing £3 9s. from a shop. He was said to have been attending cinema shows.

Sentence: Three years' detention in a Borstal Institute.

CRIME AND THE CINEMA

We are hearing a good deal about juvenile crime that is fostered by visits to the cinema; and in one case given in our table of punishments above, it will be seen that the Judge took so serious a view of a theft of £3 odd, said to be due to the influence of the cinema, that he sent the offender, a youth of 16, to a Borstal institution for three years. Probably this is not the worst thing that could happen to him, if the good effect of the Borstal training is all that it is represented to be.

But although it is made impossible for a boy thief to offend against the rights of property for another three years, the rights of the human person are not defended in the same way when these also are attacked under cover of a cinema performance, as in the parallel case at Devonport, also cited above. Here is a kind of cinema crime that few people are engaged in condemning; yet it is of immeasurably greater seriousness, and is apparently on the increase.

In addition to the abominable offence recorded in the Devonport case, our correspondent sends us the account of another terrible case, the details of which are too horrible for publication, in which a man, convicted at Plymouth Police Court of an indecent assault on a little girl of six years' old which physically injured her, was given the usual choice of being dealt with summarily, which he took, and he was sentenced to six months' hard labour. We are not, as our readers know, advocates of severe sentences. But we do demand that if cases of forgery and larceny are sent to the Assizes and dealt with in terms of penal servitude, such cases as those in which the bodies and souls of little girls are involved should not be left to summary jurisdiction in which the maximum sentence that can be given is six months' hard labour.

A Suffragist's Protest

Mrs. Ramsay, a well known Plymouth Suffragist, writes to the *Western Evening Herald* to protest against the leniency of the sentences mentioned above, and against the real dangers of the cinema, which are usually ignored altogether by those who denounce these shows as causing "juvenile crime."

(In the Devonport cinema case, by the way, the magistrate did not censure the man—even asking, before passing sentence, if he would lose his position if convicted!—but the clerk censured the parents for allowing children to go to places of amusement unattended. Similarly, in the Plymouth case, the mother was censured by the magistrate for her "want of control," in breaking down in Court when the little one told of the horrible things that had been done to her.)

"Had the Bench," writes Mrs. Ramsay, "been composed of some 'mothers,' as well as some 'fathers,' do you think the punishment would have been so lenient? I trow not."

I was lately talking to an Australian lady on this very subject, and she said: "I am truly astonished at the leniency of your magistrates over here—on indecent and criminal assaults on young children"—and then she added with set lips: "I never thought much about the possession of the vote at home. I have always had it. Since I came over here, however, I realise what a most godly weapon it

can be when a woman wishes to protect her children."

The *Western Evening Herald* deserves the support of women for its courage in publishing the protests of Mrs. Ramsay and other Suffragists against the condonation of these terrible crimes against children.

DOES A MAN SUPPORT HIS WIFE?

We have often had occasion to ask this question; the answer has almost invariably, to use the official formula, been in the negative. If an astonishing decision by the magistrate sitting at Tottenham Police Court (*Daily Chronicle*, May 19) should hold good, it would seem to be established afresh that a woman has no legal power of securing maintenance by her husband, short of going into the workhouse—and that would be a lengthy business if, as in the case in question, the man is a soldier. A woman who appeared before the magistrate with the complaint that her husband was about to join the army, and intended to make an allotment in favour of another woman, was informed that he could make an allotment to anyone he chose, but the military authorities would only pay the separation allowance if they were satisfied that the woman was dependent upon the man. When it was further pointed out to the magistrate that the other woman was the wife of a soldier and already drawing a separation allowance, the magistrate is reported to have replied that that fact did not abolish the soldier's right to do what he liked with his money.

We cannot believe that the man's wife would be unable in such a case to establish her right to the separation allowance; but the magistrate's statement, if correctly reported, proves that the wife has to establish that right, where the man denies it, before she can get a penny; and his decision, if good in law, reveals a bitter injustice.

WOMEN ON ACTIVE SERVICE

Two Sides of the Question

Mr. Lloyd George, speaking at Conway on May 6, said: "Women are coming more and more to the rescue of the men. In munition works we have got pretty nearly 300,000 of them engaged upon tasks which before the war no one ever assumed a woman was capable of discharging—metal work, chemical work—some of it heavy work—and agriculture."

An example of the way women are doing this work was given by Sir William Beardmore, speaking at the annual meeting of the Iron and Steel Institute on May 4, when he told of the output of the girls in the projectile factory at Parkhead Forge, which, he said, was in all cases double that of thoroughly trained mechanics, working the same machines under the same conditions.

More Praise!

Lord Selborne confessed to a conference of agriculturists in the Shire Hall, Worcester, on May 15, that "Every day I get less sceptical as to what a woman can do if you get hold of the right woman." And Mr. H. G. Wells, in a long article in the *Daily News* (May 20), says:—

"Those women have won the vote. Not the most frantic outbursts of mili-

tancy after this war can prevent them getting it. The girls who have faced death and wounds so gallantly in our cordite factories have killed for ever the poor argument that women should not vote because they had no military value. Indeed, they have killed every argument against their subjection."

The Other Side

But all this praise does not blind us to the fact that there is another side to it. We are not dealing here with the political aspect of all this praise of woman—(does Mr. Wells, for instance, with his dramatic "Women have won the vote!" realise that unless he and others bestir themselves in women's defence an immediate Reform of the Parliamentary Register may make it difficult for women to win their vote for another decade or more?)—but with the industrial side.

Highly paid posts in the Civil Service are still held by men only, in spite of the recommendations made by the Royal Commission, whose sittings we have now almost forgotten. A Conference to discuss this point was held recently in London by the Women's Industrial Council, at which Miss Haldane presided, and Miss Clementina Black, Mrs. Fawcett, Mrs. Deane Streetfield, and Miss K. Wallas spoke. It was resolved unanimously to establish a committee to secure the execution of the Royal Commission's recommendations, the success of whose efforts will have the hearty good wishes of our readers.

The Cheapness of Women

On the other side, too, is the remark of an employer, quoted by Miss Mary Macarthur, who said that he "could not get a man, but women were ten-a-penny." The significance of this statement is seen in correspondence in the *Times* and *Daily News*, showing the prejudice against women of 40 and older, which is shown by employers of all kinds, who are encouraged, no doubt, by the similar prejudice which obtains in Government offices. Another reason for the unemployment of older, and in many cases more experienced and competent, women is probably the low rate of salaries offered, especially in clerical and teaching work. Naturally, young girls can better afford to take a low salary, and are, therefore, more popular with employers. But what about the standard of the work?

And of Their Lunches

Low salaries account for another phase, too, of the "other side" of the question of women's war work. A furious correspondence appeared in the *Times* recently on the subject of "City Girls' Lunches." Very truly it was stated by various correspondents and by employers who were interviewed that there is a great lack of cheap luncheon places to meet the influx of women into commercial life. It does not seem to occur to most of these good people, who are so deeply

concerned over the meals of the City woman worker, that one solution of the problem would be to pay them an adequate salary, so that, like City men, they could afford to lunch at a good restaurant.

RESOLUTIONS

The Royal Commission

At the annual meeting of the Manchester Men's League for Woman's Suffrage, Sir William Milligan gave an address on the Report of the Royal Commission on Venereal Disease. The following resolution was passed unanimously: "That this meeting, while recognising the urgent need for legislative measures against the spread of venereal disease, recognises also that any such legislation would affect women as well as men, and in the past has discriminated against women; it is, therefore, of opinion that the enfranchisement of women is an indispensable preliminary to the enactment of any such legislation, as providing the only adequate means of safeguarding the interests of both sexes and at the same time securing the most satisfactory treatment of the problem."

Mrs. Sheehy Skeffington

In the course of a resolution of sympathy with Mrs. Sheehy Skeffington, passed by the Executive of the Women's International League, the following passage occurs:—

"Like her, we, who share the faith of Francis Sheehy Skeffington and believe, as he did, in the sacredness of life, desire no more bloodshed, neither do we ask for vengeance upon those who decreed his death; we desire only that the principles for which he lived and died shall be made manifest. We believe that by this means his death will bring home to the public conscience the great truth that only by reconciliation, justice, and liberty can the nations live."

FORWARD CYMRIC UNION

We are asked to announce that, as we stated last month, Mrs. Mansell-Moullin has been obliged, owing to ill-health, to resign the post of Honorary Secretaryship of the Forward Cymric Suffrage Union, and that this will now be filled by Mrs. Jones. It is requested that all communications be addressed to her at 259, Gladstone Road, Barry, South Wales.

"How General Conscription Affects Women,"

By EVELYN SHARP

See "*Christian Commonwealth*" for May 17.

Miss Sharp's next Article in the "*Christian Commonwealth*" will appear on June 14.



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